

TROOP C

1931-1940

After the creation and passing of Senate Bill 36, the Missouri State Highway Patrol began protecting the citizens of Missouri and monitoring the traffic on the state's roadways. On October 5, 1931, the 1st Recruit Class began training at the St. Louis Police Training Academy. After completing their training, each member was assigned to one of the six troops throughout the state. One of the six original troops was located in Kirkwood, Missouri, and named Troop C.

The location of the Troop C Headquarters was the basement of the Highway Department district building, in Kirkwood, Missouri. In November 1931, Captain Thomas L. Leigh became the first officer given the responsibility of troop commander for Troop C, St. Louis. Troop C consisted of 14 counties: Crawford, Gasconade, Phelps, Pulaski, Montgomery, Warren, Lincoln, St. Charles, St. Louis, Franklin, Jefferson, St. Genevieve, St. Francis, and Washington counties. Along with Capt. Leigh, the original members of Troop C were Sergeant Robert E. Moore, and Troopers Frank D. Hagan, Jerome F. Shaw, Kinnaird O. Duncan, Wayne G. Henderson, Gordon H. Noonan, Aubrey G. White, and Ralph I. Cox. The troop's zones were located in St. Louis County, Wentzville, Rolla, Flat River, and Desloge.

In 1935, as a result of the development of the new Troop F and other boundary changes, Troop C was given Perry County from Troop E, Poplar Bluff. Troop C lost Phelps and Pulaski counties after a shift in the troop assignment of several southern counties. In October 1939, Lewis B. Howard became the new Troop C commander, replacing Capt. Leigh. Captain Howard would hold the position of troop commander until March 30, 1942.

Section 8 of the original Missouri statute regarding the Patrol stated the superintendent of the Patrol was to keep, collect, and compile information for use in the detection of criminals. To be in compliance with this requirement, Colonel B.M. Casteel created the Bureau of Investigations Unit on August 1, 1934. Col. Casteel named Sgt. Robert E. Moore, Troop C, as head of the new bureau. In addition, he was promoted to captain. After the word had spread throughout the state about the new bureau, the workload in the division became overwhelming. So many fingerprint and criminal records were coming in that Capt. Moore and his limited staff could not keep up. Reorganization within General Headquarters was made to accommodate the workload.

In December 1937, St. Genevieve County Sheriff Henry J. Drury issued Trooper James F. Judkins a card identifying him as a special deputy sheriff to assist at a local hanging execution. Thirty-one-year-old Hurt Hardy was hanged on the St. Genevieve County Farm, one mile north of town, for the murder of a 20-year-old farm girl. Hardy had shot the young lady through a crack in the barn door as she was preparing to milk some cows on September 28, 1935. A

professional hangman from Illinois, who had executed 59 other condemned convicts, was brought in to conduct the hanging. The hangman placed a black hood over Hardy's head and strapped his arms and legs to his body, before hanging him.

In 1938, Troop C Headquarters was moved from its present location in the basement of the Highway Department to a newly constructed headquarters at Highway 40 and Ballas Road. This new centrally located headquarters went on the air on January 1, 1939, under the command of the original troop commander, Captain Leigh.

In October 1939, L. B. Howard was promoted to the rank of captain and served as the Troop C commanding officer, replacing Captain Leigh.

1941-1950

On April 14, 1941, off-duty Troopers Harry K. Thurner and R.E. "Gene" Butler were traveling east on U.S. Highway 66 in Thurner's personal vehicle en route to Troop C Headquarters. Both were wearing the khaki shirts and trousers that had been their recruit uniforms during the Patrol training at Camp Hawthorne in 1939. As all new troopers do, they were unconsciously observing traffic. About 20 miles west of Eureka they observed a 1940 Chrysler, bearing Nebraska plates, which caught their eye. They turned to each other and attempted to recall information they had received previously regarding this vehicle. Neither was able to recall the information, but continued to observe the vehicle. They began following the vehicle as it began to pull away from them. This peaked their suspicions even more. They began pursuing the vehicle for 15 miles, before they forced the vehicle off the road.

As they approached the vehicle and identified themselves as troopers, the driver yelled, "Ha, cops! I thought you were a couple of yokels wantin' to race. That's what I get for not holing up somewhere and getting some sleep. So, I'm pinched at last! Well, here's the loot."

He then handed them a briefcase which contained a .380 automatic, a .38-caliber revolver and \$1,295. Both troopers asked, "The loot?"

The driver then realized he had blown his own cover. He stated, "I'm caught and you don't even know me? What were ya chasin' me for?"

They informed him that they were just "in pursuit of a hunch". The driver then informed them that it was a good hunch. He identified himself as Orval Lloyd Skinner, a man wanted in several states for bank robbery, the most recent which was the day before in Louisville, Nebraska. After Mr. Skinner completed his confession and surrendered the evidence, both troopers recalled the dispatch they had been given of a lone male driving a 1940 Chrysler with Nebraska plates who was wanted for two bank robberies in Nebraska and two in Iowa. These two officers ended a criminal career which had great potential. Upon his release from the Missouri State Penitentiary in 1939, Mr. Skinner devised a plan for robbing banks. He also stole cars and license plates for use during the robberies before he flew on TWA back to his safe residence in California to hide his loot. Three

weeks after Mr. Skinner's capture, he pled guilty to all four robberies and was sentenced to permanent residency by the U.S. Government in the federal penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas.

On October 4, 1941, the Tower Room of the Congress Hotel in St. Louis hosted the "First Decennial", commemorating the 10 anniversary of the Patrol. The event was planned and organized by Sergeant Eugene P. Clark. Thirty-seven original members of the Patrol, in full dress uniforms, and an equal number of distinguished guests gathered to honor the two deceased members of their class, Sergeant Ben Booth and Trooper Clyde Kinder, as well as the four current members who had been wounded in the line of duty. Governor Forrest Donnell addressed the group, then Colonel Lewis Ellis spoke expressing heartfelt words and showing his undying support and esteem for the organization he had led.

The Highway Patrol had been in existence for one decade and several great strides had been made. However, World War II was coming and Troop C would suffer their first line of duty death. On December 2, 1941, Troop C suffered the loss of one of their own. Trooper Fred Walker, a native of Gallatin, Missouri, and member of the 4th Recruit Class, was pursuing a stolen vehicle occupied by two men on Highway 25 near Bloomfield, Missouri. Tpr. Walker caught the vehicle, placed both of the men under arrest, and handcuffed them (in front of their bodies). He placed them in the patrol car--one in the front right and the other in the back seat. One of the subjects had a handgun hidden on his body that Tpr. Walker had not found. The subject produced the weapon, while they were traveling to the jail. A struggle ensued and the subject shot Tpr. Walker. The two men then pushed Tpr. Walker out of the patrol car and left him alongside the road. The two stole the patrol car, but abandoned it shortly after. Tpr. Walker, who was critically wounded, was taken to Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, where he died of his injuries the following day--at the same time, his killers were apprehended in Perryville following an extensive manhunt. The two men were sentenced to 99 years in prison. Troop C Radio Operator Parker Kilby was working the radio console alone when the shooting occurred. He worked the next 12 hours straight. He left only when he lost his voice from the heavy radio traffic. Tpr. Walker had been assigned to desk duty prior to the incident; however, he wanted to get back on the road. This request was granted when the new class of recruits graduated from the Academy and several were assigned to Troop C.

In response to a significant loss of manpower due to the military onset of World War II, Colonel M. Stanley Ginn decided to supplement the Highway Patrol with a force of trained, part-time civilians. The formation of the Missouri Auxiliary Highway Patrol was announced on February 21, 1942. The individuals received no pay, had no police authority, and used their own vehicles. Those whose vehicle was equipped with a radio, were given the Patrol frequency to receive information from troop communications.

All troop commanders formed an auxiliary unit in their troop. Applicants were required to attend a 16-week, two-hour training session, to include topics

such as war traffic, theft prevention, geography, combating incendiary bombs, protection against gas, internal security investigations, and military drill. They purchased their own uniforms, and were issued only a cap, patch, and emblem for their windshield of their car by the Patrol. Nine hundred fifty auxiliary members were trained originally; Troop C was assigned 150.

A change occurred in the Troop C command staff on March 31, 1942, with Thomas E. Whitecotton, being promoted to the rank of captain, replacing Capt. Lewis B. Howard. Captain Whitecotton would hold this position until September 21, 1944.

Improvements in the Patrol's radio division were made with the addition of base stations in all troop headquarters and equipping 25 patrol cars with one-way radios. The FM car transmitters permitted communication between the fixed stations over distances of 50-60 miles. By 1942, all patrol cars were equipped with the high tech transmitters. This proved to aide in transmitting pertinent information to Highway Patrol vehicles, resulting in quicker response and apprehension of subjects. On August 11, 1943, Troop C radio received information a bank robbery had occurred in Hawk Point, Missouri, in southwest Lincoln County, by two men who fled in an old model Pontiac. Patrol cars were immediately advised by radio and dispatched to the area, along with notifying surrounding agencies by telephone. In a very short time 29 patrol and sheriff's cars provided a perimeter to the area while officers on the scene provided more detailed information to the perimeter officers. Within three hours the bandits' car was spotted and all patrol cars were advised by radio.

A high-speed chase began and traveled through Clarksville, before a tire on the getaway vehicle was shot out by one of the officers. The bandit vehicle stopped and the bank robbers surrendered. Officers recovered \$3,000 stolen from the bank. Within three days the two men involved were sentenced to 50 years and 35 years in the Missouri Penitentiary. This incident made it very obvious to everyone that the new improved radio equipment was very beneficial for relaying information to road officers.

An article in the 1943-44 Official Manual of Missouri stated, "No one can foretell how the advancements in communication being made during the war will affect police radio, but it can be stated definitely that the Missouri State Highway Patrol will take full advantage of these new developments to assist in the protection of lives and property of the people of the state."

On September 22, 1944, Jerome F. Shaw became the new troop commander for Troop C, replacing Capt. Thomas E. Whitecotton. Captain Shaw would hold this rank until July 31, 1945, when John A. Tandy would replace him on August 1, 1945. Captain Tandy held the position of troop commander from August 1, 1945 until August 14, 1946. On August 15, 1946, Lieutenant Clarence E. Potts assumed the position of "acting" troop commander, until September 30, 1946.

On July 1, 1946, the largest recruit class to be trained in the Patrol's history reported to the Cuivre River Recreational Area outside of Troy, Missouri.

Lieutenant George W. Pate was assigned the duty of supplying groceries for the 62 recruits and the training staff. This assignment proved to be very difficult, because many foodstuffs were still rationed, since World War II had just ended. All recruits were asked to bring spare "ration books" to training with them to ease the situation.

Knowing it was permissible to butcher your own meat without stamps, Lt. Pate bought 10 steers from a local farmer and paid him to pasture them until they were needed. With the aid of a local butcher in Troy, Lt. Pate butchered and dressed out the meat, then stored it in a cooler in Troy until it was needed to feed the recruits in the training class. Other food items were obtained from a friend of Lt. Pate, who owned a Kroger store in Troy. Items difficult to find were purchased from store grand openings all over the state, thus the class of 1946 "ate high on the hog".

In October 1, 1946, after returning from military service, Lewis B. Howard was promoted to the rank of captain, and became the new commanding officer of Troop C, replacing "acting troop commander" Lt. Potts.

In January 1950, the troop boundaries again changed. Troop C relinquished Perry County to Troop E, Gasconade and Montgomery counties to Troop F, and Crawford County to Troop I. In exchange, Troop C gained Pike County from Troop B.

1951-1960

On March 1, 1954, Chester R. Oliver was promoted to the rank of captain, and became the new Troop C commanding officer. Captain Oliver replaced Captain Lewis B. Howard, who had held the position from October 1, 1946-February 28, 1954.

The Patrol's radar program started in June 1956, with Trooper Bob Burgess being selected to be the Patrol's first and only radar operator. He conducted very thorough research of the dual antenna radar units, even traveling to New Hampshire to the factory where the first radar unit was made. Upon returning, Tpr. Burgess' patrol car was equipped with a two-piece Electromatic stationary radar unit. He made up his schedule one week at a time, working 9-10 hour days, six days a week. He is the only officer who has made arrests in every county in the state.

His first arrest using the radar unit occurred in Jefferson County in October 1956. This arrest and 13 others made the same day were tried together because radar was so new. The judge found all defendants guilty, however, he imposed no fines. The judge anticipated the cases would draw a lot of publicity and the word of the new highly effective equipment being used would warn motorists to slow down.

On July 26, 1956, newly trained driver examiners in brown uniforms reported for duty at examination stations in St. Louis County, City of St. Louis, Jackson County and Buchanan County. Prior to this, all driver examiners were commissioned officers. Officers of the police departments in their area examined

those applying for a driver's license. The driver examiners are very courageous, placing their life in the hands of strangers on a daily basis. Troop C Driver Examiner Joe Bacon was assigned to give road tests in the City of St. Louis in the late 1950s. Anyone that has been given the pleasure of accompanying a new driver can attest to the fear of the unknown when they accompany the subject on their first flight.

Examiner Bacon told of being pleased to see an applicant show up in a clean, late model Plymouth with an automatic transmission. This wasn't the broken down, dirty standard transmission guaranteed to cause whiplash every time the clutch was released. At the beginning of the test, he noticed she was a little nervous and overly cautious. She kept her left foot on the brake and provided acceleration by overpowering the vehicle's brakes. She continued this, until she realized she was closing in on a taxi in front of her. As her anxiety increased, she stepped harder on the brake and yet harder on the accelerator. The smell of burning brake liner consumed the vehicle, as the Plymouth was now racing down the road and quickly closing in on the taxi, which had been far ahead of them. The Plymouth didn't stop until it was firmly embedded in the trunk of the taxi, with the V8 engine still humming. Fortunately, no one was seriously injured in the crash, just another day in the exciting yet dangerous life of a Highway Patrol driver examiner.

Retired Captain Bob Hagan began his career with the Missouri State Highway Patrol as a driver examiner. He tells the following stories:

"I was involved in several accidents while giving the driver's test. We had moved the examination office from Grand Avenue to 10th and Washington in downtown St. Louis, and the road test was given in the downtown area, which was always congested. While giving the driving test to a gentleman, I instructed him to make a right turn at the next corner. After making the turn, he held onto the steering wheel. We jumped the curb and drove into the side of a restaurant, knocking a large hole into the side of the brick building."

"We always asked applicants for identification. For a young man, we would accept a draft card as ID. Some people who felt they couldn't pass the test would have someone else come in and try to take the test for them. A lot of the people in the area didn't have middle names, so their draft card would have "NMN" in that blank, which stood for "no middle name". One day a man came in and handed me a draft card. I asked him for his date of birth and then asked him what his middle name was. He made the sound for the letters "NMN". He had read the card and didn't realize what "NMN" stood for." He thought it was the person's middle name."

1961-1970

In 1960, the Water Rescue Recovery Unit was established, to provide trained personnel to search under water where drowning or other water-related disasters occurred. The team originally consisted of four troopers, however, the team grew quickly. Troop C members Troopers A.R. Lubker and R.J. Hagan

became members of the Underwater Recovery Team (URT). The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* featured the URT in their *Sunday Magazine* on March 26, 1961. The article reported that in the first eight months of the unit's existence they recovered three bodies from the Lake of the Ozarks and one from a pond in New Bloomfield. The *Post* referred to the team as "frog cops". A shortage of scuba gear plagued the team, but several of the men bought their own equipment. Due to a constant struggle with funding and the creation of the Boat Commission, the team was discontinued in 1966.

On October 1, 1961, Willie S. Barton, was promoted to the rank of captain, and became the new Troop C commanding officer. Captain Barton, replaced Capt. Oliver, and would hold this position until February 28, 1970.

On February 15, 1964, Sergeant Herbert L. "Soby" Sobolewski suffered a heart attack while directing traffic on U.S. Highway 40 near Wentzville. He was directing traffic near a tractor-trailer crash when he collapsed. He was taken to St. Joseph's Hospital in St. Charles and later transferred to St. Luke's Hospital, where he died. Sgt. Sobolewski came on the Patrol October 1, 1939, and was first assigned to Troop D, but transferred to Troop C during World War II. He was promoted to sergeant and assigned to Wentzville on September 1, 1946.

He came from a wealthy family that owned several banks. He typically purchased one or two Cadillacs each year, which was an issue to the Missouri Legislature, as Colonel Hugh Waggoner was trying to get a pay raise bill passed. Colonel Waggoner asked Sgt. Sobolewski if he could stop driving a Cadillac as it was making it difficult to get the pay raise approved. Sgt. Soby, declined, and told the colonel to refer anyone raising the issue to him, and he would be glad to show them where the money for the cars came from and would be even happier to tell them how sorry the pay was for troopers. He was highly respected by the citizens of Wentzville. As a show of its respect, the city of Wentzville named a ball field Sobolewski Field.

In 1966, Troop C troopers assisted in capturing a "gentle" bear that was frolicking with two ponies in a farm field. After several minutes and failed attempts Trooper Kelems, Trooper Bergman, and Trooper Rousset were able to lure the animal into an empty animal pen and close the gate. After the successful roundup was complete, the animal's owner arrived to take claim to his pet. It was later learned the bear had previously bit the owner on the arm and severed a blood vessel causing the owner to be taken to the hospital.

After losing the troop range and other acreage, and having outgrowing its building at Highway 40 and Ballas Road, 16 acres of ground were purchased at Highway 40 and Mason Road, to construct a new Troop C Headquarters in 1966. Construction began on the new Troop C Headquarters building in April of that year. The 22,000-square-foot structure was expected to be complete by June 1967, at a total cost of \$575,000. This new facility would consist of two levels, the upper consisting of administrative offices and public waiting area, a central Communications Division with skylights, pneumatic tube system throughout the building for the rapid transfer of documents, mechanical equipment space,

extensive storage areas, and radio and repair shops. The new Troop C location was located two miles west of the existing location on Highway 40 at Mason Road.

On September 4, 1966, Sergeant Allen S. Whitmer was called out at 4:35 a.m., for a traffic accident at the Cuivre River Bridge on Highway 61, about two miles north of Troy, in Lincoln County. Upon arrival, Sgt. Whitmer saw the greatest destruction resulting from a traffic crash he had seen in his 18 years on the Patrol. A southbound tractor pulling a semi-trailer loaded with 40,000 pounds of potatoes had run off the road seconds before reaching the bridge. The tractor had crashed full force into the bridge abutment and superstructure, without any braking by the driver. The bridge was composed of three 180-foot spans that were 20 feet wide.

The force of the crash was so great it pulled the first span from the abutment and caused the right side of the bridge to collapse. The momentum of the truck carried it into the twisted bridge rail and continued to completely destroy the entire tractor, trailer, and bridge. The 21-year-old Iowa driver was thrown from the vehicle and killed. The trailer and its contents were strewn across the entire bridge, and even were entangled high in the twisted remaining portion of the bridge. The destruction caused the bridge on U.S. Highway 61 to be closed to traffic, which was detoured along Route B and Highway 79 to Interstate 70. Others used Route KK, which was a gravel road that traveled through the Cuivre River State Park.

Anyone that has ever been a police officer knows occasionally someone will try to find a price to get out of the trouble they have created. Occasionally, someone will offer to pay an officer for services rendered, whether it be changing a tire or giving a stranded motorist a ride. In 1967, Trooper James L. Carter was offered a large token of appreciation, but his impeccable integrity could not be broken. Tpr. Carter had worked a three-car accident in O'Fallon, Missouri involving a retired Army officer and his wife, who were from Oregon. Because their vehicle was damaged, Tpr. Carter went above and beyond the call--he took the couple to a pharmacy to have a prescription filled after a brief check up at the local hospital, and then to a motel to stay for the night. After the Army captain inquired as to why Tpr. Carter was assisting them so much, Tpr. Carter replied that he was just trying to help, and that it was not uncommon to assist people who are involved in accidents so far from home. The Army captain stated he had been all over the country and had never been treated with such consideration and courtesy. As he shook Tpr. Carter's hand he handed him a \$50 bill. With the utmost integrity and honor Tpr. Carter thanked the gentleman and returned the \$50 bill.

In June 1967, after 14 months of construction, the new 22,000-square-foot Troop C Headquarters was complete. The new facility replaced the previous headquarters, which was located at the intersection of Highway 40 and Ballas Road, just east of Interstate 270 in St. Louis County next to Missouri Baptist Hospital. The modern styled, two-story building offered soft, blue carpeting, a

large public waiting room with very comfortable easy chairs, a large Records Room with a pneumatic tube system to transfer reports from the front desk, a Communications Center with acoustic walls, floors and skylights to provide natural daylight to the workspace, various administrative offices, and a morale-building coffee room on the first floor. The second floor consisted of a large meeting room, administrative facilities (dark room, evidence technician offices, polygraph room, etc.) mechanical equipment space, a radio repair shop and additional storage space. Words couldn't describe the beauty of the new building and the sense of pride of all involved in the development of the facility.

Captain W.S. Barton, Troop C commanding officer was instrumental in the designing of the new headquarters and took great pride in the success of the new construction. An open house was held on July 16, 1967, for public inspection. For several weeks prior to the open house Capt. Barton, Lieutenant Dolan, Lieutenant Thurmond, and many of the Troop C officers and employees planned and worked to make the open house a success. Approximately 2,000 invited guests and friends toured this new and most modern Highway Patrol facility in the nation.

Sergeant H.M. Schmitt and Troopers J.E. Faber and W.N. Coy were working a very successful radar enforcement operation on Interstate 70 east of O'Fallon, when traffic suddenly slowed down. A motorist then stopped and advised Tpr. Faber of a sign warning motorists "radar ahead". Sgt. Schmitt went to the location and found a sign made from an old piece of plywood, a greasy mop handle, and large red letters. Also, on the shoulder of the road near the sign was the title to a vehicle with an O'Fallon resident's name on it. Sgt. Schmitt had just recently denied the subject whose name appeared on the title a dealer's license for running the business out of his home. The subject was forced to move the business to a local service station to operate. Knowing the location of the dealer's business, Sgt. Schmitt went to the station to pay them a visit. At the station, Sgt. Schmitt located the remainder of the mop handle and the plywood used to make the sign. He spoke with the station owner, who admitted that the person who made the sign was the man on the title, and the man's explanation was that "he owed the Patrol one". With these facts, the officers applied for and were issued warrants on the subject, charging him with littering the highway. The subject pled guilty to the charge and was fined \$50 and costs in Magistrate Court, St. Charles.

A huge commercial auto theft ring operating in South St. Louis, St. Louis County, and Jefferson County was broken up in January 1969, and 37 stolen vehicles were recovered. Those instrumental in breaking up the theft ring were Sergeant Robert Mudd, and Troopers Donald Doughty and Robert Mallery, Troop C; Detective Harold Westbrook, St. Louis Auto Theft Squad; and Agent Melvin Degraw, FBI. The ring bought vehicles that were almost destroyed by accidents. The vehicles came from insurance companies and salvage yards. Serial number plates of the vehicles were transferred to stolen cars and the titles were used to sell the stolen vehicles to legitimate dealers. Two men were charged in federal

court for interstate transportation of stolen cars and in Missouri court with car theft.

On July 15, 1970 Troop C Headquarters received a call from a woman ham radio operator in Illinois. The woman stated she was receiving a message from near Williamsburg, Pennsylvania, stating that a loaded school bus with children had gone over a cliff. Lieutenant A.F. Clossin authorized Radio Operator Richard King to make a long distance phone call to the Pennsylvania State Police. The information was relayed to the Pennsylvania Police, which led to the discovery of a wrecked bus with children. Seven children were killed and several others injured in the crash. The Pennsylvania Police discovered the bus driver had an extensive record of convictions for traffic accidents, and his license had been suspended five times.

1971-1980

On June, 1973, Albert F. Closson was promoted and became the ninth commanding officer of Troop C. Captain Closson served in this capacity until September, 1977.

On October 1972, a motorist came into Troop C Headquarters wanting a Missouri road map. While he was looking at the map, he casually mentioned to Sergeant P.J. Naumann that a young boy was climbing the radio tower. Sgt. Naumann ran to the base of the tower, looked up, and sure enough saw a young man about half way up the radio tower.

Sgt. Naumann yelled up to the young man, "Hey you can't do that, come on down."

After the young man climbed down, he was asked why he was climbing the tower. The young man replied, "I was just doing what I was told to do by my dad."

Apparently, the young man was at a nearby soccer field when the boy's father jokingly told him to "Go climb a tower".

Colonel Sam S. Smith, the superintendent of the Missouri State Highway Patrol, announced Perry County would become a part of the Patrol's Troop C effective January 1, 1975. Perry County was under the administrative jurisdiction of Troop E, Poplar Bluff until then.

"The completion of Interstate 55 makes Perry County much more accessible to our Troop C Headquarters in Kirkwood in terms of mileage and communications." Col. Smith also stated a new Zone 14 would be created in Troop C effective January 1, 1975. The new zone included Saint Genevieve and Perry counties. Corporal George R. Cumberland, who was stationed in Saint Genevieve was promoted to sergeant on January 1, and was the first zone sergeant in Zone 14.

On October 1977, John N. Kiriakos was promoted to captain and became the 10th commanding officer of Troop C. Capt. Kiriakos served as troop commander until May 1980.

On May 1980, Edward F. Christman was promoted and became the 11th commanding officer of Troop C. Capt. Christman served as troop commander until June 1981.

1981-1990

On July 1981, Carl J. Huckle Jr. was promoted to captain and became the 12th commanding officer of Troop C. Captain Huckle served as troop commander until October 1984.

On October 30, 1981, the Troop C pistol team won the inter-troop match held in Jefferson City. The team shot a total score of 2,347 and had a team average of 586.75. This was the first time Troop C won the match since 1966. It was also the last time Troop C had their own range. Troop C moved to its current location on 599 South Mason Road in 1967. The indoor range that was built in 1967 was considered an ultra modern, computerized indoor range. The members of that winning team were Corporal Tom LeFaivre, Trooper Larry Marten, Trooper Francis Gehner, Trooper Mike Rutherford, and Corporal Rich Rehmeier.

On November 1994, John H. Ford was promoted to captain and named the 13th commanding officer of Troop C. Captain Ford served as troop commander until August 1987.

On March 2, 1985, Trooper James Froemsdorf gave the ultimate sacrifice when he was killed in the line of duty. Tpr. Froemsdorf had made a traffic stop on Interstate 55 near Brewer, Missouri. Tpr. Froemsdorf found the driver, Jerome Mallet, was wanted in Texas on a robbery charge. Tpr. Froemsdorf handcuffed the suspect and was ready to transport him to the Perry County Jail. Due to a deformity, Mallett was able to free one of his hands from the confines of the handcuffs and attack Tpr. Froemsdorf. During the struggle, Mallett removed Tpr. Froemsdorf's pistol from his holster and shot and killed Tpr. Froemsdorf. A massive manhunt ensued and Mallet was captured three days later. Mallett was executed on July 11, 2001, for the murder of Tpr. Froemsdorf.

On September 1987, Roy G. Foss was promoted and became the 14th commanding officer of Troop C. Captain Foss served as troop commander until August 1988.

On September 1988, Dale E. Buschmann was promoted to captain and designated as the 15th commanding officer of Troop C. Captain Buschmann served in this capacity until August 1994.

On January 26, 1989, inspection stations in the Troop C area were honored for 20 years of uninterrupted service to the state of Missouri. Captain D. E. Buschmann presented a special, silver commemorative inspection station license issued by Colonel John H. Ford, superintendent, to approximately 45 inspection station owners who had been in the inspection program since 1969.

1991-2000

Nine of Troop C's 11 counties were affected by the Great Flood of 1993. Troop C officers directed traffic, blocked highways, and assisted the public in leaving their homes when floodwaters were on their way. Troop C's helicopter, 96MP, was in constant demand by the State Emergency Management Agency, the Missouri State Water Patrol, the Coast Guard, and the Missouri Highway Transportation Department, as well as numerous local departments. Troop C pilots used the helicopter to rescue a local resident from the flood's swirling waters. Troop C also assumed a primary role in the visit of President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore to a flood summit of affected governors in Arnold, Missouri.

On September 1994, William K. Seibert was promoted to captain and named the 16th commanding officer of Troop C. Captain Seibert would serve as troop commander until September 1997.

From July 1-July 10, 1994, the Missouri State Highway Patrol provided security at the Olympic Village on the campus of Washington University during the U.S. Olympic Festival, which was held in St. Louis, Missouri. More than 3,000 amateur athletes from around the country competed in the games. The Patrol had 35 officers and 13 communication personnel assigned to the Olympic Festival security detail.

In 1995, telecommunicators replaced troopers assigned to the desk (desk sergeants) and allowed three additional officers to be reassigned to road duties. Troop C's authorized strength was increased from 134 troopers to 137.

In the summer 1995, the Commercial Motor Vehicle Division brought on line a state-of-the-art weigh station on Interstate 70 at Foristell, Missouri, in St. Charles County. A special technological feature of the facility is a system known as WIM (weight-in-motion). The scales actually weigh the tractor-trailer unit as it moves across the scales, and the vehicle does not have to stop unless required to do so by the weight inspector.

The year 1996 started off with a "bang" for Troop C. A storage room caught fire sending smoke throughout the building. Troop C Communications was knocked off the air, and all the telephones were out of service. Because of long hours of work performed by Troop C maintenance staff, Troop C Communications personnel, and Southwestern Bell Telephone, Troop C was back on the air in a relatively short period of time.

On October 1997, Paul D. Parmenter was promoted to captain and named 17th commanding officer of Troop C. Captain Parmenter served as troop commander until September 2002.

On April 7, 1998, Commercial Vehicle Officer Steve D. Wilmesherr was traveling east on Interstate 44 near Eureka, Missouri, when he noticed a tractor-trailer traveling in the passing lane at a high rate of speed. When the truck passed CVO Wilmesherr, he heard the slapping sound of a tire that had gone

flat. CVO Wilmesherr stopped the truck at Interstate 44 and Lewis Road. The driver of the truck told CVO Wilmesherr he was hauling limes and pineapples to Chicago, Illinois. While speaking to the driver, CVO Wilmesherr noticed several inconsistencies with the statements the driver made. While inspecting the driver's logbook, several discrepancies arose as to locations, dates, and times.

Sergeant Sean Moore arrived a short time later and gained consent to search the tractor and trailer. The truck and trailer were transported to Troop C Headquarter where it was searched. A search of the trailer revealed the largest drug seizure in the history of Troop C. Over 827 kilos of marijuana along with 667 kilos of cocaine and two kilos of heroin were seized.

On Wednesday, April 15, 1998, at 8:30 a.m., the largest car crash in Missouri's history occurred. Not only was it the largest car crash, it was the luckiest one! The 98-car pileup blocked eastbound Interstate 70 for half a mile in O'Fallon, Missouri, and resulted in over 40 people being taken to four area hospitals. None of the injuries were considered life threatening. Four officers wrote 98 individual crash reports. Sgt. William (Bill) T. Davis was one of the first troopers to arrive on the scene. Shortly after arriving on the scene of the 98-car pile-up, Sgt. Davis call Corporal Bennie Flowers on his radio and told him to hurry and get on the scene and assist him. Cpl. Flowers immediately advised Sgt. Davis he was on the scene. It turned out that Sgt. Davis arrived on the scene from the west and Cpl. Flowers arrived on the scene from the east. The crash scene was so long and spread out that Sgt. Davis could not see Cpl. Flowers. Trooper N.C. Davenport and Trooper Harold Smith both assisted with the crash reports. The cause of the crash was related to a hard rain making the pavement slick, sunshine appearing suddenly blinding drivers, and too many drivers traveling too fast for road conditions and following too closely. O'Fallon, St. Peters, and St. Charles County police departments assisted the Patrol.

On April 1998, a runaway barge on the Mississippi in downtown St. Louis, struck the President Riverboat Casino (Admiral). At the time of the collision, there were 2,300 people on board the 375 foot-long casino. The impact caused the Admiral's center exit ramp and temporary walkway just off the ramp to buckle and break. Trooper Eric C. Beishir who was working at the time, was able to warn the patrons on the walkway. Patrons were evacuated with the assistance of the Patrol. Only minor injuries were reported.

During the month of January 1999, Pope John Paul II visited St. Louis, Missouri. Plans for the pope's visit began in the spring 1998 and involved federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. More than 130 troopers were assigned to the detail. Assignments included security, motorcade and parade routing, and crowd and traffic control.

In April 1999, Troop C's new laboratory opened for business. The laboratory is located on the Mineral Area College campus near Flat River. The building also houses the Troop C Service Center, DDCC office, and garage.

On May 20, 1999, Trooper Mark G. Broniec stopped Thomas O. Keene at the 196-mile marker of Interstate 70 in Warren County. Shortly after the traffic

stop, Trooper Eric Bartel arrived at the scene to provide backup for Tpr. Broniec. Tpr. Broniec asked for and received consent to search Keene's van. Located in the van were five packages of marijuana weighing over 11 pounds. Keene was placed under arrest and handcuffed.

As Tpr. Bartel was placing Keene into his patrol car, Keene broke free and ran onto Interstate 70. Keene stood in the passing lane facing traffic and it appeared that he wanted to be struck by a passing vehicle. Tpr. Bartel ran onto the highway and tackled Keene, thus knocking him into the median out of harm's way. Later, Keene admitted that he wanted to kill himself. Keene suffered a broken clavicle and was taken to Warrenton Hospital for treatment. According to Tpr. Broniec, who witnessed the event, a vehicle missed Tpr. Bartel and Keene by approximately 30 feet. For his actions, the Patrol awarded Tpr. Bartel a Meritorious Citation at its annual awards banquet in May 2000.

In August 1999, the National Governors' Association (NGA) was held in St. Louis, Missouri. Governors, as well as their family members, from more than 40 states came to participate in the weeklong conference. Planning for the conference began two years prior and included an on-site visit by key coordinators at the 1998 conference, which was held in Wisconsin. The Patrol had more than 180 personnel assigned to the detail. The conference was held at the Adams Mark Hotel in downtown St. Louis and included many venues such as the Fox Theater, the St. Louis Art Museum, and the City Museum. One of the most outspoken governors who attended the NGA was the governor of Minnesota, Governor Jesse Ventura. President Bill Clinton and Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff General Colin Powell attended the conference.

On March 15, 2000, at 10 p.m., Trooper Alan R. Flannery attempted to initiate a traffic stop on Route "B" near Route "E" in Jefferson County, Missouri. The driver of the vehicle, Michael Wayne Thomas Jr., of Cedar Hill, Missouri, refused to stop and a pursuit ensued. Approximately, five minutes into the pursuit, the vehicle came to a stop on Old Morse Mill Road just west of Route "E" in Jefferson County. After the vehicle came to a stop, both the driver and front seat passenger fled the vehicle and a foot pursuit ensued.

Tpr. Flannery chased Thomas for over a quarter of a mile through a cornfield before he caught up with the two subjects and attempted to make an arrest. During his attempt to arrest Thomas, a physical confrontation took place, and Tpr. Flannery was assaulted. Thomas removed Tpr. Flannery's ASP (collapsible baton) from his duty belt. Thomas deployed the baton and struck Tpr. Flannery numerous times. The first blow was to the top of Tpr. Flannery's head, stunning the officer.

Trooper Flannery said, "I heard a metallic sound and then I thought I was being struck by lightning." Before the struggle ended, Tpr. Flannery received six blows to his head by Thomas. After the last strike, Tpr. Flannery was able to distance himself from Thomas and fire his weapon five times. Due to the enormous amount of blood, Tpr. Flannery was unable to see, and all five shots missed Thomas. Tpr. Flannery received over 70 stitches to his head and face.

Michael Wayne Thomas was sentenced to 20 years for his crime against Tpr. Flannery.

Monday, October 16, 2000, was a sad and tragic day for the citizens of the state of Missouri. While flying through a thunder storm over Jefferson County, Missouri's Governor Mel Carnahan, his son Randy Carnahan, and the governor's long time aide Chris Sifford were killed in a tragic plane crash. Troopers working Jefferson County as well as adjoining counties responded to the scene of the crash, and, sadly, there were no survivors. Troop C personnel remained on the scene of the crash and assisted county, state, and federal officials who had responded to investigate the crash.

2001-Present

In September 2001, Troop C recognized Sergeant Hubert Looney as the first African-American to retire as a member of the Missouri State Highway Patrol. Sgt. Looney was employed by the Patrol for 24 years and retired as one of Troop C's public information and education officers.

In September 2001, Sergeant James W. Remillard was recognized as Troop C's Officer of the Year for his efforts in a variety of activities. Sgt. Remillard wrote the Troop C Exposure Control Plan. Sgt. Remillard also spent hundreds of hours planning and organizing the National Governors Association conference, which came to St. Louis in 1999. Because of his work with the Troop C Exposure Plan, Sgt. Remillard was appointed as the chairman of a committee to reformulate the method in which the Highway Patrol handles hazardous exposures statewide. In 2002, Sgt. Remillard was promoted to lieutenant and transferred to Troop I in Rolla, Missouri.

On November 2, 2001, Timothy Lamar Bilbrey of Gastonia, North Carolina, committed an armed robbery from a pharmacy in Leadington, Missouri. During the armed robbery, several drugs were taken from the pharmacy. Leadington, Missouri, police officers initiated the pursuit and chased the suspect's vehicle while it was traveling on MO Highway 67 in Jefferson County, Missouri. Bilbrey exited from MO Highway 67 and continued west on MO Highway 110. A number of agencies, including county deputies and the Missouri State Highway Patrol, pursued the suspect until Bilbrey lost control of his vehicle, which eventually overturned and came to rest on its top.

Sergeant Mark A. McCalister was involved in the pursuit for approximately the last mile before Bilbrey overturned his vehicle. Shortly after the suspect's vehicle overturned, Sgt. McCalister and the other officers approached the overturned car and ordered the driver to place his hands on the glass. The driver refused to obey the directions of the officers and began to crawl on his hands and knees on the roof of the car. As Sgt. McCalister approached the car, he heard one gun shot from inside the vehicle and saw glass shatter from the driver's side window. Sgt. McCalister returned fire with a shot from his shotgun. Bilbrey died at the scene--a semi-automatic handgun was located in his hand.

On August 29, 2002, the family of Tpr. James M. Froemsdorf, as well as troopers from throughout the state gathered in Perryville, Missouri, to honor a fallen member of the Missouri State Highway Patrol. During a special ceremony, a sign was unveiled which designated a portion of Interstate 55 as the "Trooper James Froemsdorf Memorial Highway". The section of highway dedicated for the memorial includes the 134-mile post, which has been a site over the years for flowers and letters left to Tpr. Froemsdorf and his family.

During the dedication, Col. Roger Stottlemeyer said, "Trooper Froemsdorf was the 12th Patrol member to lose his life in the line of duty and we have had way too many since then."

The ceremony included remarks by Capt. Paul Parmenter, retired commanding officer of Troop C; Sergeant Timothy Tinnin, president of the Missouri State Trooper's Association; Perry County Presiding Commissioner Tom Sutterer; State Senator Anita Yeckel; and State Representative Patrick Naeger.

On October 2002, Ronald S. Johnson was promoted to captain and became the 18th commanding officer of Troop C.

On Friday, January 18, 2002, Zachariah B. Bell, entered the Farmers Bank of Jefferson County, robbed it, and took Angela S. Voiles, a female customer, hostage. The subject then fled the area in the hostage's vehicle. A pursuit ensued in St. Louis County, into Illinois, and back into St. Louis County. Sergeant Gary Heskett and the St. Louis County Police Department were involved in the pursuit. After the robber drove the hostage's car off the road and the chase ended, the robber held the hostage at gunpoint and refused to surrender. Sgt. Heskett took control of the negotiations with the bank robber and as able to convince him to release the hostage and surrender. Sgt. Heskett was later awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the United States Attorney's Eastern District Office.

In November 2002, the Department of Public Safety named Troop C Trooper Al P. Nothum as DPS Employee of the Month for November 2002. Tpr. Nothum initiated a traffic stop on Interstate 44 in St. Clair, Missouri, which led to the arrest of the driver. Further investigation revealed a fully functional methamphetamine laboratory in the trunk of the vehicle. The arrest of the subject led to the arrest of four other subjects actively making methamphetamine at a residence in Franklin County.

On November 16, 2003, Trooper Amie McClelland was promoted to the rank of corporal. Corporal McClelland was assigned to Jefferson County, Zone 3, as assistant zone supervisor and had the proud honor of being the first female corporal in the history of Troop C to serve as an assistant zone supervisor. In 2005, Cpl. McClelland resigned from the Missouri State Highway Patrol to accept employment elsewhere.

Trooper Michele Coon received the "Troop C Officer of the Year" award for 2004. Tpr. Coon received this award for her dedication as a member of the Troop C SERT Team where she served as a negotiator. Tpr. Coon also served as

a member of the Critical Incident Stress Management Team, and for continually volunteering her time to support those less fortunate in her community.

On March 10, 2004, Corporal Gary C. Swartz stopped a vehicle on Interstate 70 in Warren County for a traffic violation. A computer check revealed the vehicle and occupants were wanted in King County, Washington, for the murder of a King County deputy sheriff's son. The subjects were taken into custody with out incident.

On October 10, 2004, Trooper Cliff Karst was assisting the Warren County Sheriff's Department with a suicidal subject who was holding his own son hostage. The subject, Christopher Maldonado, was driving back and forth from the house he was living in to the edge of the driveway. Armed with a .22-caliber semi-automatic rifle and riding on an ATV, Maldonado released his son and began to taunt the officers at the scene. Maldonado's ATV became stuck when he drove it off the side of the long winding gravel driveway. He exited the ATV, raised the rifle and pointed it at Trooper Karst. Tpr. Karst, a sniper on the Troop C Special Emergency Response Team fired a round from his AR-15, striking Maldonado in the upper right arm. The subject did not move nor did he adhere to the orders of Tpr. Karst do drop his weapon. Trooper Karst then fired a second round from his AR-15 striking the subject a second time. Maldonado fell to the ground severely wounded. Maldonado was transported to a hospital where he underwent surgery for his non-lethal gun shot wounds.

On April 20, 2005, Troop C suffered a tremendous loss when Trooper Ralph C. Tatoian was killed in a tragic traffic crash on Interstate 44 near Pacific, Missouri, while responding to a SERT call out. At 2:39 a.m., Troop C's Special Emergency Response Team (SERT) was activated and in the process of responding to the staging area in Leslie, Missouri. Earlier that same morning, a member of the Gasconade County Sheriff's Department was shot while responding to an armed robbery call at a store in Mount Sterling, Missouri. A pursuit ensued before the suspect fled on foot into a wooded area near the Gasconade-Franklin County line.

While responding to the staging area, Trooper Tatoian crested a hill on Interstate 44 and struck the rear of a tractor-trailer parked in the passing lane on the interstate. The driver of the tractor-trailer had stopped his truck in the passing lane in order to assist a gentleman involved in a minor traffic crash when his car struck the concrete median wall. The vehicle was disabled, stopped in the passing lane, and facing east in the westbound lanes. When Tpr. Tatoian crested the hill on Interstate 44, he saw the headlights of the disabled vehicle. Tpr. Tatoian swerved his patrol car to the right lane to avoid a head on collision. After entering the right lane of Interstate 44, Tpr. Tatoian drove back into the left lane (passing lane) and struck the rear of the parked trailer unit, which killed him instantly. At approximately 4:45 a.m., Tpr. Tatoian was killed. Tpr. Tatoian's funeral was held in St. Louis, MO, on April 23, 2005. His wife, Deborah, and three children: Samantha, Ralph Jr., and Max, survive him.